

INFORMATION SHEET

ORDER R5-2017-XXXX
SOPER COMPANY, SPANISH MINE
NEVADA COUNTY COUNTY

Soper Company owns the historic, inactive Spanish Mine, a former underground gold and surface barite mine covering approximately 456 acres. The property is located approximately three miles north of the town of Washington in Nevada County. The Spanish Mine operated intermittently as a gold mine from 1883 to 1942 and as an open pit barite mine from the late 1970s to 1988. As a result of former mining activities, groundwater seepage through the underground mine workings produces and discharges moderately acidic water containing metals ("acid mine drainage" or "AMD") from two mine adits (A00-1 and A-003) to Poorman Creek, tributary to the South Fork Yuba River.

In July 2008, the Central Valley Water Board adopted WDR Order R5-2008-0104 (NPDES Permit No. CA0085286) regulating discharges from the Spanish Mine adits. In August 2008, the California Sport Fishing Protection Alliance petitioned the issuance of the NPDES permit to the State Water Resources Control Board contending that in approving the permit, the Central Valley Water Board violated federal NPDES regulations and the State Water Board's policy for Implementation of the Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California (SIP) by failing to include various numeric effluent limitations in the permit.

In 17 November 2009, the State Board issued Water Quality Order 2009-0015 remanding the permit back to the Central Valley Water Board for reconsideration and revision, either to *"include numeric effluent limitations or to comply with the applicable requirements for including BMPs in lieu of numeric effluent limitations for priority pollutants"*.

In 2011, after consultation with Central Valley Water Board staff, Soper constructed two passive treatment systems (PTS) for the treatment of AMD from the A-001 and A-003 adits. In March 2015, Soper submitted a Report of Waste Discharge for the PTS and land disposal of mine drainage from the Spanish Mine.

Treated effluent from the Spanish Mine PTS is now discharged to land and as a result of treatment, there is an overall net decrease in metals entering and impacting both groundwater and surface water and an overall improvement in groundwater quality. Point source discharges from the mine workings to surface waters have been eliminated and NPDES Permit No. CA0085286 is no longer necessary to regulate this site.

JSH